

threw the standish (ink-pot) at his man's head because he writ a letter for him where, instead of saying (as his master bid him) that "he would have writ himself, but that he had the gout in his hand", he said that "the gout in his hand would not permit him to put pen to paper"/

Certainly she practised her own theory. But her writing is not simply honest English; in her lighter vein she often recalls the vivid prose of Elizabethan comedy, until one feels at moments as if she had been brought into the world, not by Sir Peter Osborne, but by Shakespeare, at some date between Beatrice and Rosalind. She complains, for instance, of her goldsmith's utter lack of invention: 'What a strange fellow this goldsmith is, he has a head fit for nothing but horns. . . . It makes me think of the fellow that could paint nothing but a flower-de-luce who, when he met with one that was so firmly resolved to have a lion for his sign that there was no persuading him on't, "Well," says the painter, "let it be a lion then, but it shall be as like a flower-de-luce as e'er you saw."' Surely this touches Bottom! Similarly in her serious moods she has a literary quality that echoes the wistful quietness of Tralierne, or of Izaak Walton, whose *Angler* came out in this same year 1653. One such passage is well known, in which she describes 'a common that Hes hard by the house, where a great

many young
wenches keep sheep and cows, and sit in the
shade singing
of ballads'; but no less lovely is her picture of
a summer
evening's loneliness: 'Last night I was in the
garden till
eleven o'clock. It was the sweetest night that
e'er I saw.
The garden looked so well, and the jasmine
smelt beyond
all perfume. And yet I was not pleased. The
place had
all the charms it used to have when I was
most satisfied
with it, and, had you been there, I should
have liked it